



Portraits of Patriotism

“U.S. Army 1776-1900”

A MIDST the fire and turmoil of revolution, the Continental Congress established America's Army on June 14, 1775. Congress simultaneously appointed GEN George Washington as the Army's commander in chief, authorized some military provisions ... and held its breath. After all, Congress was entrusting a vast amount of power to one man to secure the colonies' hopes for liberty.

The Congress need not have worried, however, for Washington saw the Army as defender of the republic but subservient to civilian leadership. Each succession of military leaders over the Army's long and distinguished history has recognized and upheld this vision, captured here in a 1909 Howard Chandler Christy painting titled “U.S. Army 1776-1900.”

In addition, Washington's prescription for preparedness is as valid today as it was on the day the Army was born. According to retired LTG David R. Palmer, former superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., Washington sought an effective, well-trained and disciplined Army backed by reserve components; defenses for the American homeland; a logistical complex to foster mobilization and deployment; a defense industry capable of rapid expansion; and a system of professional education to develop leaders.

Today's Army is a direct reflection of the integrity and loyalty of the Army that Washington built in America's Revolutionary era. With these time-honored precepts to guide it, America's Army remains well positioned to face the uncertainties of an unstable world. — *CPT Patrick Swan*

